

Brahmaviharas (Metta Karuna Mudita Upekkha)
Sublime States (Loving Kindness Compassion Sympathetic Joy Equanimity)

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Internationally renowned Sri Lankan Buddhist Monk Venerable Narada Maha Thera (1898–1983) was an expert in metta [loving kindness] meditation. He was the author of the classic book *The Buddha and His Teachings* in which Chapter 42 is The Sublime States [Brahma Viharas]. He gave me Panca Sila [Five Precepts] and the Buddhist name Upasika Jayasili in Sri Lanka in July 1975. He also taught me metta [loving kindness] meditation. When I approached his Monastery to meet him, I felt metta [loving kindness] coming out of the monastery into the street from him. Years later I mentioned this to Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Mahanayaka Thera who commented that when people seriously practice metta [loving kindness], this changes them and this change can be sensed by others who are sensitive to this. This first really strong experience of metta [loving kindness] from a wonderful Monk transformed my life. I realized I needed to try to develop metta [loving kindness] to the best of my abilities.

One of the most senior Theravada Buddhist Monks in the world Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Mahanayaka Thera Abhidhaja Maharathaguru Aggamaha Pandita DLitt DLitt (1896-1998) gave me the Bodhicari Precepts in London in August 1994. I was the first person to take the Bodhicari Precepts outside the USA. Bodhicaris can be defined as “practitioners of the Buddha Dhamma who have attainment of enlightenment as their goal”. In Pali the feminine form is Bodhicarini. The Bodhicari Precepts are an expansion of Ajivatthamaka Sila [Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the Eighth] and Panca Sila [Five Precepts]. The 10th Precept is *Sabba sattesu metta sahagatena cetasa viharana sikkhapadam samadiyami* [I undertake the Precept to live every moment with loving-kindness to all living beings]. This Precept is based on Navanga Uposatha Sila [Nine Uposatha Precepts] with loving-kindness as the ninth.

The Bodhicari Precepts

- 1) *Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from killing and injuring living things
- 2) *Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from taking that which is not given
- 3) *Kamesu micchacara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from sexual misconduct and excessive sensuality
- 4) *Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from false and harmful speech
- 5) *Pisuna vaca veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from backbiting
- 6) *Pharusa vaca veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from using harsh or abusive speech
- 7) *Samphappalapa veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from useless or meaningless conversation
- 8) *Sura – meraya – majja pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*
I undertake the Precept to refrain from drink and drugs which fuddle the mind and reduce mindfulness
- 9) *Micchajiva veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the Precept to refrain from wrong means of livelihood

10) *Sabba sattesu metta sahagatena cetasa viharana sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the Precept to live every moment with loving-kindness to all living beings

11) *Yavajivam aham ratanattayam na niggahissami tatheva tam samadarena garukaram karissamiti sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the Precept not to revile the Three Treasures [the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha] but to cherish and uphold them

12) *Karunopaya kosalla pariggahitanam dasaparaminam paripurana sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the Precept to practise the Ten Perfections with compassion and skill
Imani dvadasa sikkhapadam samadiyami

I undertake these twelve Precepts with full sincerity

I was authorized to teach The Dhamma by Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Mahanayaka Thera in 1983, and by Venerable Hammalawa Saddhatissa Maha Thera Chief Sangha Nayaka of the UK and Europe (1914-1990) in 1984. Venerable Pidiville Piyatissa presented me with a Sangha [Community of Buddhist Monks] Authorized Dhamma Teacher badge, and a cream sash presented to those who have taken the Ajivatthamaka Sila [Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the Eighth] for life at Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Manchester's Vesak Celebration in May 2006.

I have taught alongside Monks at meditation retreats at Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Manchester, and at LBV London Buddhist Vihara (the oldest Theravada Buddhist Vihara in the UK). I have also taught meditation classes at London Buddhist Vihara. This often involved teaching metta [loving kindness] meditation.

I have been a member of The Buddhist Society London (founded in 1924 and celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2024, and the oldest Buddhist organisation in England) since the mid-1970s. I taught the Introducing Buddhism course at The Buddhist Society London. This included giving talks about the Four Brahma Viharas [Sublime States/ Divine Abodes] metta [loving kindness], karuna [compassion], mudita [sympathetic joy] and upekkha [equanimity]. I was the joint author with Venerable Dr Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Mahanayaka Thera of the booklet *Introducing Buddhism*, which was written to accompany the course. *Introducing Buddhism* has been published in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, UK and USA, and is available online on websites including Google Books, Access to Insight and Internet Archive. This booklet includes both The Metta Sutta [The Discourse on Loving Kindness] and an explanation the Four Brahma Viharas [Sublime States/ Divine Abodes].

BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada) was founded in September 1991. I was one of the founders. Venerable Dr Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Mahanayaka Thera and Bhante Henepola Gunaratana Maha Thera (an internationally respected meditation master and author who has been resident in the USA for many years) agreed to become BGKT's founder spiritual advisors. Bhante Gunaratana often uses loving friendliness as his translation of metta instead of loving kindness since the Pali word metta comes from the Pali word mitta which translates as friend. When I have attended meditation sessions and retreats Bhante Gunaratana has taught, he always started with metta [loving kindness] meditation to ensure the mind was in the correct frame of mind to meditate. We follow this in BGKT. Teachings in BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada)'s Open Meetings are based on *Mindfulness in Plain English*, *Loving-Kindness in Plain English*, *Start Here, Start Now: A Short Guide to Mindfulness Meditation* and The *In Plain English* series by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana published by Wisdom Experience.

I have taught at BGKT and also at Keswick Buddhist Group (Theravada). This has included teaching metta [loving kindness] meditation and giving talks about the Four Brahma Viharas Sublime States/Divine Abodes:

Metta Loving Kindness
Karuna Compassion
Mudita Sympathetic Joy
Upekkha Equanimity

In BGKT we recognise that metta [loving kindness] assists the development of sila [ethics/morality] and meditation and mental development.

BGKT members including me, have written articles about metta [loving kindness] for Buddhist and interfaith magazines.

I have been involved in interfaith since the early 1980s. I am the WFDEIP Westmorland and Furness Diversity Equity and Inclusion Partnership Lead for Interfaith and Multifaith. I attend local interfaith forum committee meetings. I am a WCF World Congress of Faiths Member. Members of BGKT including myself, have frequently chanted or read the Metta Sutta [The Discourse on Loving Kindness] at interfaith events and services.

Together with Upasaka Sumedha and Upasaka Dhammika from BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada), I led the Prayers before the Kendal Town Council Meeting chaired by the then Mayor of Kendal on Monday 12 April 2010. We chanted the Metta Sutta [The Discourse on Loving Kindness] in Pali, and Upasaka Sumedha read it in English. We also presented a wooden Buddha Rupa [statue] to the Mayor, for the Mayor's Parlour in Kendal Town Hall. As far as we are aware, BGKT was the first Buddhist Group to chant a Sutta before a Council meeting in England.

I was included in *Burkes's Landed Gentry, Volume III, England's Northwest including Contemporary People of Distinction* (2006) as a Contemporary Person of Distinction in recognition of my religious work. The then Mayor of Kendal requested that a Pali Buddhist Blessing Ceremony be conducted for the Mayor's Parlour in Kendal Town Hall to celebrate this achievement. This Ceremony in October 2007 included chanting the Metta Sutta [The Discourse on Loving Kindness].

In 2009 the three Theravada Buddhist Groups in Cumbria (Carlisle, Kendal and Keswick) started CMDM Cumbria Moon Day Meditation to enable us meditate at the same time 7-9 pm on the uposatha four moon days (Full, New and Half Moon). Those who wish to do so meditate at home, supported by other meditators in Cumbria who are doing the same. In BGKT we used CMDM to develop the practice of Navanga Uposatha Sila [Nine Uposatha Precepts]. A Burmese lady who used to live in Kendal and attended our Group introduced the Navanga Uposatha Sila [Nine Uposatha Precepts] where a Ninth Precept of metta [loving kindness] meditation is added. The 9th Precept is *Metta Saha gatenā cetasa, sabba pana bhutesu mñasam pharitva viharanam samādiyāmi* [I undertake the rule of training to stay with a tranquil mind infused with volition of love unto all living creatures]. The eight Uposatha Precepts can be seen as negative and metta [loving kindness] helps develop a positive state of mind. The Navanga Uposatha Sila [Nine Uposatha Precepts] are included in Bhikkhu Bodhi's *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A translation of the Anguttara Nikaya* as 18(8) Loving-Kindness on pages 1271- 1273. His note 1875 on page 1822 is "An expanded parallel of 8:41 [uposatha], the eight precepts augmented by the meditation on loving-kindness". The Navanga Uposatha Sila [Nine Uposatha Precepts] are described in *The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara-Nikaya, or More Numbered Suttas, Volume IV*

The Book of the Nines, viii (18) Amity pages 259 -260. The Pali Commentary to this Sutta states "Loving-kindness meditation is included in accordance with the temperament of the people to be guided".

In 2014 Sakyadhita [International Association of Buddhist Women] acknowledged me as the first Buddhist Fire Chaplain in the world. Through my role as a Fire Chaplain, I have come into contact with many people who practice secular mindfulness including the friendliness practice which is a secular version of metta [loving kindness] meditation. This is a very important development as it ensures that benefits of metta [loving kindness] are also obtained by those who have not chosen to follow the Buddhist path.

Ever since my first meeting with Venerable Narada Maha Thera I have understood that metta [loving kindness] is central to the Buddhist path. My interactions with Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya and Bhante Henepola Gunaratana strengthened this. I try to follow their example.

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The two main Suttas about metta [loving-kindness] are The Karaniya Metta Sutta The Discourse on Loving-kindness and the Metta Nisamsa Sutta The Discourse on the Benefits of Loving Kindness

StNp 1.8 Sn 1.8 Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Discourse on Loving-kindness

The Sutta Nipata StNp/Sn (The Sutta Collection/The Discourse Group) is the fifth book of the Khuddaka Nikaya and consists of 71 short suttas divided into five vaggas (chapters). Chapter 1. Urugavagga The Snake Chapter includes The Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Discourse on Loving-kindness.

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Mettasutta Amaravati Sangha

Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving-Kindness

<https://suttacentral.net/kp9/en/amaravati?reference=none&highlight=false>

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Access to Insight

Anguttara Nikaya AN 11.16 Mettanisamsa Sutta Discourse on Advantages of Loving-kindness translated from the Pali by Piyadassi Thera

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Forest Sangha

Booklets by Ajahn Amaro. Available on the Forest Sangha website.

<https://forestsangha.org/>

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Don't Push – Just Use The Weight Of Your Own Body: Compassion

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I'm right, You're: Loving-kindness

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